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10 April 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: 10 April Negotiations Developments

1. U.S. Delegation: At the 10 April non-group meeting, Mr. Habib informed us that it now looks as if the U.S. delegation for the initial contacts with the DRV will consist of:

Governor Harriman (Chief of the Delegation)
Cyrus Vance (Second ranking member, apparently
named on 9 April)
Mr. Habib
Mr. Jorden
Gen. Goodpaster
Mr. Davidson (substantive assistant to Governor Harriman)
Mr. Frank Sieverts (personal aide to Governor Harriman)
Two interpreters, probably John Negroponte for
Vietnamese and Alex Toumayon (sp?)
for French
Three State Department secretaries

2. The above list includes several exceptionally able people, but I want to call your attention to the fact that the only person on that roster who has much real knowledge of or feel for the situation in Vietnam and the attitudes of the GVN is Mr. Habib. Bill Jorden can make some contribution on this score, but the others have not been directly or intimately involved with the situation inside Vietnam. Phil is an officer of great ability for whom I have high professional and personal regard; but at times (though not always) he can be diffident about insisting that his superiors take cognizance of unpleasant facts at variance with their wishes or preconceptions. This could cause problems should Phil mute what will be the delegation's only voice from the real world of Vietnam.

3. Place and Time: As of noon, 10 April we had heard nothing further from Hanoi in response to our suggestion of Delhi, Rangoon, Jakarta or Vientiane as alternates to Geneva (which they do not like) and Phnom Penh (which we do not like). Nonetheless, there was still some hope that the talks might begin on Monday, 15 April.

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4. Press: There was much feckless, fruitless discussion about the care, feeding and handling of the 300-odd U.S. press contingent (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV) expected to want to be present at the locale in order to cover the initial contacts with the DRV. I asked why we had to spoon-feed the press or pressure putative hosts (e.g., Ne Win) into granting blanket visas. I did not get an answer. The press matter, like other matters, is still very much up in the air.

5. CIA Support: After the main session, I had a quiet talk with Habib on the matter of Agency support, explaining we would do our best to provide anything needed or wanted but emphasizing that we needed as much lead time as possible to make necessary preparations. Mr. Habib said he was sure the delegation would need daily intelligence briefings on the situation in Vietnam, on the local situation in the host country, and on local intelligence pertaining to the conference. He assumed the Department would handle communications and security problems

6. Request for an Estimate: During the meeting, Mr. Habib asked about the status of the SNIE on Vietnam. I explained that it was in temporary abeyance pending clarification of the picture. Mr. Habib urged that it be completed as soon as possible. He said he and his Department colleagues felt strongly that whatever the piece of paper be called -- memorandum, estimate, analysis, etc. -- that Governor Harriman had to have a searching, comprehensive assessment of the current situation in Vietnam prior to his departure. I promised to take this matter up with you.

7. I have talked with [] about the above and we both agree that Habib has a point. We would like to discuss this request with you at your convenience this afternoon or at (or after) the 11 April morning meeting.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs